

# KENT NARROWS

## INTERIM MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Prepared for

Queen Anne's County Commissioners

and

Queen Anne's County Planning Department



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Coastal Zone Management Program

## CONTENTS

<u>Section A:</u>	<b>Purpose and Use of the Interim Management Guide .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<u>Section B:</u>	<b>Level I General Evaluation Criteria .....</b>	<b>4</b>
I-1	Assessment of Fit with Strategic Development Objectives .....	5
I-2	Assessment of Fit with Current Zoning, Land Use and Regulatory Parameters .....	9
I-3	Assessment of Compatibility with Master Plan Goals and Objectives .....	16
<u>Section C:</u>	<b>Level II Strategic Evaluation Criteria .....</b>	<b>25</b>
II-1	Assessment of Project Impact on Strategic Sites and Areas .....	27
II-2	Assessment of Proposed Facilities and Activities on Development Potential .....	30
II-3	Assessment of Developer Qualifications and Purposes .....	33
<u>Section D:</u>	<b>Types of Reviews, Requests and Issues Involving Level I and Level II Evaluation Protocols .....</b>	<b>36</b>
1.	Development Proposals.....	37
2.	Redevelopment Proposals.....	39
3.	Land Acquisitions and / or Assemblage Activity.....	41
4.	Community - Based Concerns .....	42
<u>Appendices</u>		
Appendix 1: Sectoral Map of Kent Narrows .....		
Appendix 2: Decision Chart .....		

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## **SECTION A: PURPOSE AND USE OF THE INTERIM MANAGEMENT GUIDE**

The Kent Narrows has been identified by the Queen Anne's County Planning Department as a strategic asset which can enhance the County's ability to attract tourist, retail, hospitality, entertainment and related economic activities. Following a preliminary study of the development issues of the Narrows, the County Commissioners decided that a strategic plan was required to guide future development (and redevelopment) to achieve the best and highest uses for the area. The principal objective in this undertaking is to foster a development program which provides economic benefits to the County's citizens generally, and the Narrows area specifically, while reinforcing the environmental and values which characterize this Eastern Shore community.

The strategic development program the County is undertaking involves an analysis of the economic, market and land development factors which will directly impact the feasibility and desirability of alternative courses of action. To be successful as a destination place, the Narrows must distinguish itself from other Eastern Shore locales with which it will compete for tourist, retail, boating, lodging and recreational trade.

The strategy which the County seeks to develop is to be guided by and informed through the participation of a broad spectrum of citizens. The County Planning Department intends to sponsor a series of small group meetings and town meetings to encourage the identification and sharing of concerns, conflicts, information and ideas. In addition, the Department intends to keep all interested parties informed of the major steps in the strategic development process through regular correspondence.

The County recognizes that the world will not stand still over the six month period required to evaluate the various markets, sites and program elements upon which a competitive development strategy must be based. For that reason, an Interim Management Guide (IMG) was drafted to assist decision makers in

evaluating development proposals and redevelopment plans submitted prior to the adoption of a strategic plan. It is not the intention of the County to delay unnecessarily or otherwise obstruct the entrepreneurial energies of local business people or outside investors. To the contrary, the success of the Narrows largely depends upon productively marshalling these energies. However, with only 11% of the total acreage of the Narrows currently qualifying as prime developable land, it is essential that projects be consistent with overall development objectives for the area. While that vision for the Kent Narrows is in the process of being formed, development proposals must be addressed in a timely and direct manner, and evaluated in regard to their potential impact on the Narrows area. The purpose of this document is to outline the major types of development issues which are likely to come up during this period, and to provide a number of simple guidelines for decision makers in addressing these matters.

Projects which do not meet these criteria or only partially comply with them, can either be denied or reviewed for modifications required for resubmittal. The purpose of the Level I criteria is to provide for a quick turn around in the project review process, without compromising the development potential of the Narrows prior to the adoption of a strategic plan.

*should be involved in evaluation* Level II evaluation criteria provide for a more thorough assessment of a project's potential impact on the value of the Narrows as a strategic asset for community economic development. These "Asset Management Criteria" are also organized into three areas of review:

- an assessment of the proposed project's impact on strategic sites and areas with the Narrows
- an assessment of the proposed project's impact on the Narrows in regard to the activities and/or facilities which will be produced and their servicing and infrastructure requirements
- an assessment of the developer's qualifications to successfully carry out the proposed project

The Interim Management Guide is not intended to replace or modify the parameters for development which were established through the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations (as amended April 24, 1989). Instead the IMG is intended as a complimentary document, which incorporates the current land use provisions within a larger strategic development framework.

The IMG is organized by two "levels" of evaluation. Level I evaluation criteria concern the compatibility of the proposed project with general development and land use objectives. The IMG divides these criteria into three areas of review:

- an assessment of the fit of the proposed project with the preliminary objectives related to the strategic development of the Kent Narrows
- an assessment of project compliance with relevant zoning, sub-division, land use and regulatory parameters as expressed in the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations (1989) and current Critical Areas and Wetlands designations
- an assessment of the project's compatibility with the goals and objectives of the County's Master Plan (1984) 7

Four potential development situations are reviewed: (1) development proposals involving parcels located within the Narrows; (2) redevelopment proposals for existing developments within the Narrows; (3) land acquisition activity within and in close proximity to the Narrows; and (4) issues raised by community and/or individuals and groups with legitimate interests in the Narrows.

## **SECTION B: LEVEL I GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA :**

### **Review of Project Compatibility with General Development and Land Use Objectives**

Three sets of criteria should be used in the preliminary evaluation of all development proposals, applications for variances, property improvements and related requests requiring administrative discretion. First, the preliminary objectives which are being used to guide the strategic development program should be recognized and adhered to as part of the review protocol. Not utilizing these principles could seriously impair the potential of the Kent Narrows development program prior to its adoption.

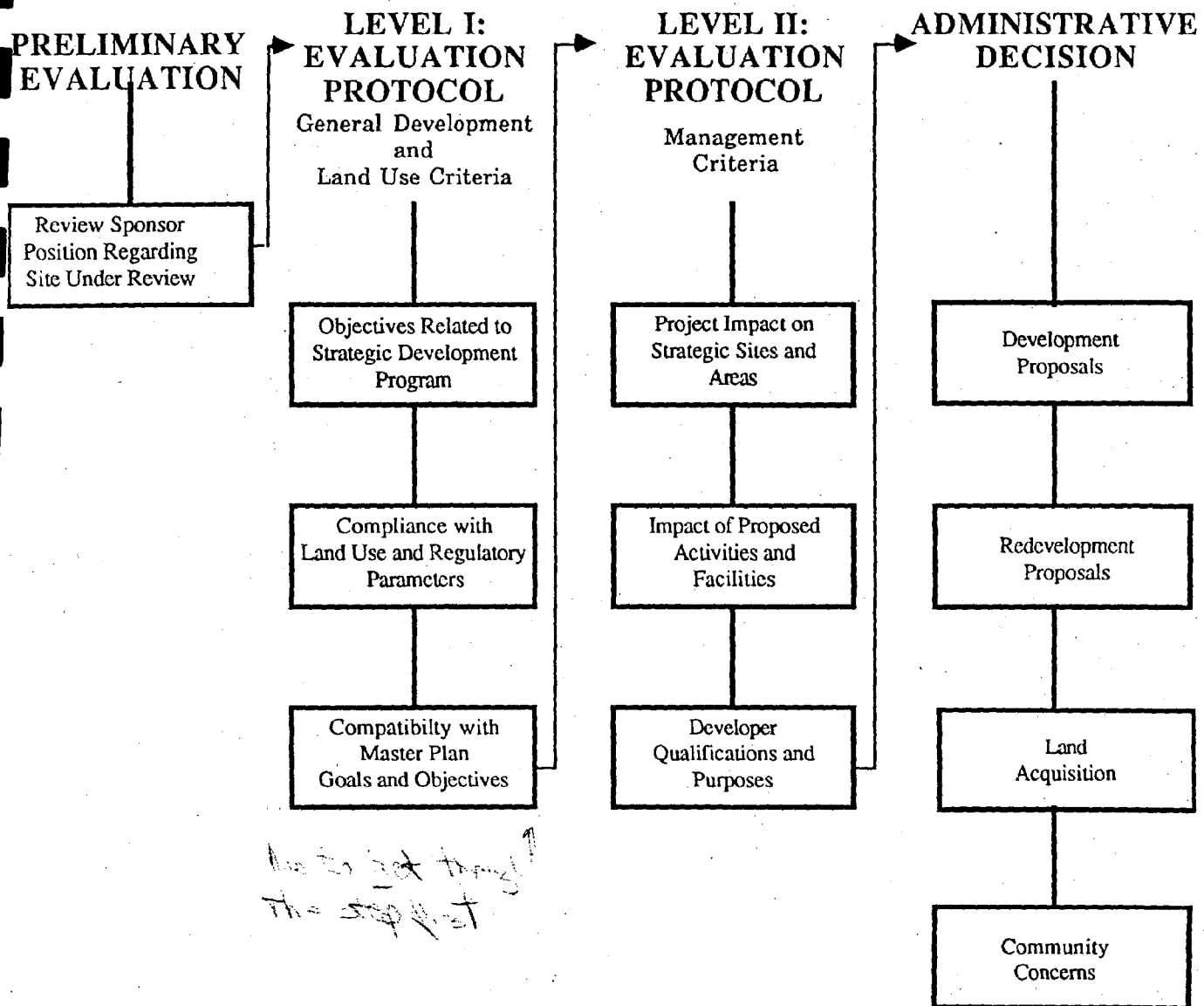
\* Second, the current zoning, land use and regulatory parameters which have been applied to the Kent Narrows area must be respected throughout the Interim Period. While, the strategic development program may call for a modification of certain zone classifications and land use designations, no exceptions or modifications to these parameters should be entertained during the Interim Period.

Third, the County's Master Plan goals and objectives which apply to the Kent Narrows area and to specific zones and sites within Kent Narrows, should be reviewed in relation to the proposal or request under evaluation.

These criteria should be made available to all developers, property owners, investors and interested parties (along with the County's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance) so the basis of the preliminary evaluation for compatibility is generally understood. It should also be clearly understood that a second level of evaluation regarding the value creation potential of the projects may also be undertaken to ensure that project approvals during the Interim Period do not seriously constrain the County's strategic goals for the Narrows.

Figure 1

# PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS



I-1. Assessment of Fit with Preliminary Objectives related to Strategic Development Program

I-1-1 Background

As was discussed in the report of July 20, 1988, the current development pattern in the Kent Narrows area is taking the form of a high speed thoroughfare. The improvements to Route 50, including the construction of the fixed high span bridge and limited on-off access ramps, combined with what are generally small land parcels, point to a strip-style development characterized by fast food restaurants, convenience stores, mini-malls and fuel stations. While these are clearly revenue producing activities, the County desires to create destination-oriented activities which encourage longer stays and the potential for higher per capita spending.

To establish destination type activities will depend upon a strong development theme which creates an ambiance and a distinct character for the area; on an appropriate mix of activities which attracts a range of visitors, shoppers and tourists; on the identification of special attractions or "target facilities"; and on a site and phasing strategy which takes into account the limited number of prime sites, access to the water and existing facilities.

Five core markets are being evaluated in the strategic planning process in terms of their revenue generation potential. These are:

- Destination Trade: focused on specialty retail / outlet shopping, cultural and entertainment activities, and events-oriented trade.
- Intercept Trade: focused on drawing shore-bound and return traffic off Route 50 to food, shopping and leisure activities.



- Itinerary Trade: focused on drawing tourists visiting various Eastern Shore communities to the north and south of the Kent Narrows.
- Maritime Trade: focused on attracting boaters to marinas within the Narrows area, and enhancing retail, food and entertainment linkages with these facilities.
- Second Home Trade: focused on evaluating the potential of the second home market to support leisure, recreational, retail and related activities within the Narrows area.

Figure 2

## LEVEL I: EVALUATION PROTOCOL

I-1

Review of Compatibility with General  
Development and Land Use Objectives

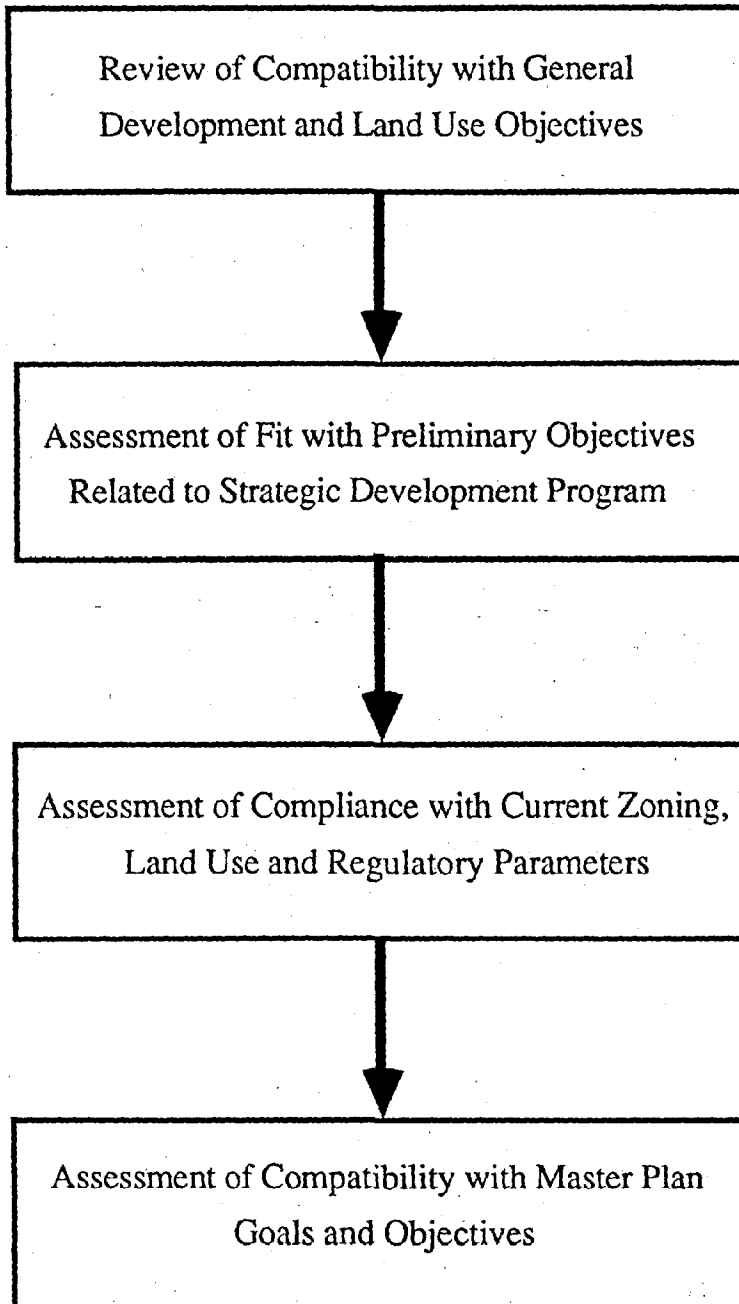
I-2

Assessment of Fit with Preliminary Objectives  
Related to Strategic Development Program

I-3

Assessment of Compliance with Current Zoning,  
Land Use and Regulatory Parameters

Assessment of Compatibility with Master Plan  
Goals and Objectives



### **I-1-2      Strategic Development Evaluation Criteria**

Based on this analysis, recommendations will be made in regard to the type of development, mix of activities and special facilities that are likely to confer the greatest economic benefits for the County. In addition to economic considerations, five criteria were identified which are to be used in evaluating the development alternatives. During the Interim Period, these criteria should be used in evaluating proposals for development or redevelopment.

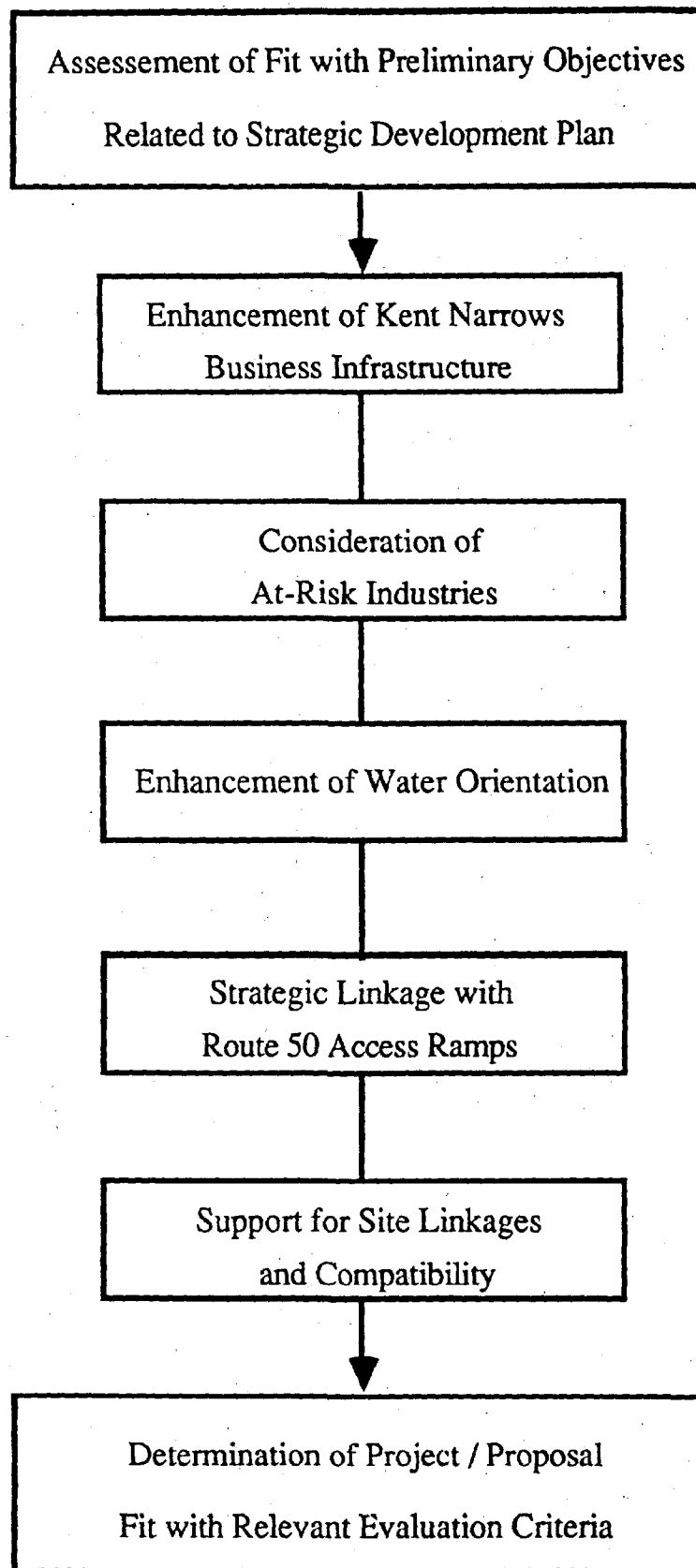
- Enhancement of Kent Narrows Business Infrastructure: The development program should support, reinforce and/or enhance the existing restaurant, retail and maritime trade located within the Narrows. The development of the Narrows is not intended to displace or replace this base of activities, but rather to build on them. *It should be recognized that many of these businesses will be impacted by the construction the Bridge and Route 50 improvements scheduled over the next three years.*
- Consideration of At-Risk Industries: The development program should evaluate alternative means of supporting those economic activities and ways of life which are most at-risk in the Eastern Shore generally and the Narrows specifically including seafood harvesting and seafood processing. The watermen and their future are to be given special consideration, recognizing the economic jeopardy of this traditional fishing industry along Maryland's Eastern Shore. ✓
- Enhancement of Water-Orientation: The development program should support public access to the waterfront and the expansion of water views, while protecting the most sensitive and fragile parts of the aquatic environment. At the current time, despite the amount of water frontage public access and views are often limited and at times are unpleasing.
- Strategic Linkage with Route 50 off/on ramps: The development program should target key elements and facilities to those sites directly accessed by the new on/off ramps which will be constructed as part of the Route 50 improvement plan. In addition, special consideration should be given to changes in accessibility to sites and facilities along Route 15 and various secondary roads as a result of these new interchanges.

- Support for Site Linkages and Compatibility: The development plan should encourage, support and provide guidance for programmatic and/or thematic linkages between parcels and sites which are located adjacent to one another or within the same area or zone. The development plan should also discourage discordant or non-compatible uses on adjacent sites or parcels located within the same area or zone. Given the predominance of small parcels, some level of piecemeal development is anticipated and should be guided to avoid the devaluation which can result from incompatible use patterns.

The Planning Department and County Commissioners should consider these preliminary guiding objectives in evaluation of development proposals during the Interim Period.

Figure 3

I-1



## I-2 Assessment of Fit with Current Zoning, Land Use and Regulatory Parameters

### I-2-1 Background

As reviewed in the July 1988 report on development issues, the Queen Anne's County Planning Department has established zoning and land use designations to encourage certain levels of development consistent with the general goals of the Master Plan, but in recognition of the special circumstances and conditions within the Kent Narrows. These parameters are reviewed briefly below. (For more detailed discussion refer to the July, 1988 report: Issue Area I, pp.1-15 and to the County's amended Zoning Ordinance of April 24, 1989).

### *Current Zoning Designations*

Presently, five of the County's zoning classifications are found in the Narrows. They are listed below along with a brief description of their respective purposes:

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| a. Village Center:            | Encourages new development or redevelopment with specific design/site plan requirements. Almost all uses allowed are conditional. |
| b. Urban Commercial:          | Permits moderate intensity retail, office, service businesses and industrial uses with suburban design standards.                 |
| c. Countryside:               | Transitional residential district between farmland and more urban areas.  |
| d. Neighborhood Conservation: | Preserves the character of existing neighborhoods.  |
| e. Suburban Residential:      | Allows moderate density residential development.  |

The amount of land assigned to each one of the five zones and its percent of the total acreage within the Narrows is as follows:

Village Center	620 acres	65%
Countryside	242 acres	25%
Neighborhood Conservation	56 acres	6%
Urban Commercial	28 acres	3%
Suburban Residential	<u>9 acres</u>	<u>1%</u>
	955 acres	100%

The dominant zoning category in the Narrows is clearly the Village Center Zone, comprising 620 acres or 65% of the study area. Furthermore, 52% or 325 acres of the land zoned Village Center Zone is presently vacant. By its description, the Village Center Zone is conducive to development. Its goal is described as "...encouraging new development or redevelopment that enriches the unique qualities of an area." This zone permits, by conditional approval, a wide variety of commercial, residential, institutional and light industrial uses, on relatively small parcels. The floor area ratio, F.A.R., at .3, is one of the highest in any County zoning category. This combination of vacant Village Center land, a wide variety of acceptable uses, small minimum parcel size and high F.A.R., make the Narrows area an attractive location for future development. These public policies give a signal to a prospective developer that the County is encouraging growth in this area.

The second largest zoning category in the study area is residential with 307 acres zoned in that classification. However, 230 or 75% of those acres are vacant. A closer look at the vacant residential acreage indicates that over 50% of the land is wetland or single family infill lots. Residential development, on the remaining land, is low density and will not have a great impact on the character of the Narrows.

### *Current Land Use Designations*

A survey of the Narrows showed five dominant land uses. First, and most abundant, is vacant land. This category makes up over 69% of the study area or 663 acres. Second, is commercial land use which includes offices, retail establishments, restaurants, seafood industries, marinas and marina related uses. This category contains 143 acres of land or 15% of the land area. The third land use surveyed is single family detached residential comprising 9% of the Narrows or 81 acres. Fourth is multi-family residential (condominiums) which accounts for 60 acres or 6% of the land area and finally, utilities, which consists of 8 acres or 1% of the entire Narrows area.

The commercial uses tend to be concentrated at the Kent Narrows Bridge location on both the north and south sides, while the residential uses cluster in the eastern end of the study area, again, on the north and south side of U.S. 50. Vacant parcels are scattered throughout the Narrows with no regular pattern, however, they do tend to front directly on U.S. 50 yielding over 2 1/2 miles of vacant land with highway frontage. This is due to the fact that most developed land in the Narrows is waterfront oriented leaving the interior parcels among the last to be developed. It can also be noted that there is over nine miles of shoreline associated with vacant parcels. The seafood industry and restaurant concentration is located on the shoreline within the commercial area surrounding the Kent Narrows Bridge on both the north and south side of U.S. 50.

### *Wetlands Designations*

One of the dominant land features in the Narrows is the presence of environmentally sensitive wetland areas. After vacant parcels, this is the largest single land feature in the study area making up over 37% or 357 acres of land area. These wetland areas show no regular pattern of occurrence. By their nature, however, they are predominantly adjacent to shorelines. The State of Maryland has identified these wetland areas as critical to the environmental future of the Chesapeake Bay and has afforded them strictly enforced protection. Cops ✓



By their sensitive environmental nature, wetlands restrict development. With over one third of the Narrows area in wetlands, much of the developable land is severely restricted. Indeed, over 50% of the vacant land in the study area is wetland which is evenly distributed throughout the Narrows. Since most of the wetland area is located along the shoreline, a good deal of very desirable waterfront land is not available for development. The waterfront land that is available, however, is concentrated directly north and south of the Kent Narrows Bridge within the existing concentration of commercial uses making this area highly desirable for development and redevelopment.

### *Critical Areas Designations*

In response to the State of Maryland's Critical Area Legislation aimed at cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, the County has made findings regarding land that shall be located in the Critical Area (1000' landward along the tidal waters of the Bay). As it has been mapped, the entire Narrows area lies within this critical area, becoming subject to environmental restrictions on development. In addition, the County has mapped development areas in response to the Critical Areas Legislation that further regulates development. Three development areas have been designated:

- Intensely Developed Areas (IDA), allowing the greatest amount of development density;
- Limited Area Development Areas (LDA), having a lesser amount of permitted density;
- Resource Conservation Areas (RCA), which have the greatest restrictions on property development.

The study area is divided into these three classifications by the following percentages: IDA 24.5%, LDA 23.5%, and RCA 52%. Over half the study area lies within the Resource Conservation Area, the most restrictive zone. Practically all the area designated Intensely Developed Area is located in the western end of the Narrows on both the north and south sides of U.S. 50, in the area bordering the Kent Narrows Bridge.

## **I-2-2      Compliance Based Evaluation Criteria**

During the Interim Period the County's designated system of zoning, land use, wetlands and critical areas should be followed without exceptions or modifications. Any and all changes to zoning and land use designations should occur in relation to the strategic development program. The evaluation of project compatibility with these established parameters involves a simple check of conformance. This will primarily be undertaken by a review of the County's relevant zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations as set out in the amended provisions of April 24, 1989. Critical Areas and Wetlands should be reviewed against current designations, as described in the County's formal response to the Maryland's Department of Environmental Protection, and illustrated on the land use plans developed by the consultants. This information should be made generally available to developers, property owners, investors and other interested parties should be informed of the designated system to avoid the submission of proposals which are incompatible. These parties should also be encouraged to make suggestions regarding modifications to this system as part of the strategic development process being conducted during the Interim Period.

### ***Compliance with Zoning Designations***

All projects for development and redevelopment should be evaluated in the context of County's Zoning Ordinance of April 24, 1989 to assure the type and intensity of development meets the intentions of the County in establishing zoning districts, use regulations, performance standards, site development standards, conditional uses and development parameters. These regulations and the attendant administrative protocols are clearly specified in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

### ***Compliance with Land Use Designations***

All development and redevelopment must comply with land use designations, as specified in the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations (1989). Land parcels are classified into four categories: commercial, residential, ~~agricultural~~ and industrial. Within these classifications, levels of intensity for development are detailed in Articles III and IV of the Zoning Ordinance (as updated April 24, 1989).

### ***Compliance with Wet Lands Regulations***

Proposals for development or redevelopment projects should meet with Queen Anne County's Comprehensive Plan directives for wetlands protection. This step is intended to assist developers in selecting areas which are not prone to flooding, inadequate soil support, limitations for on-site domestic waste disposal or any other factors detrimental to development and construction. The State of Maryland's classifications of wetlands will also have to be consulted to highlight additional areas omitted from the County's plan.

### ***Compliance with Critical Areas Designations***

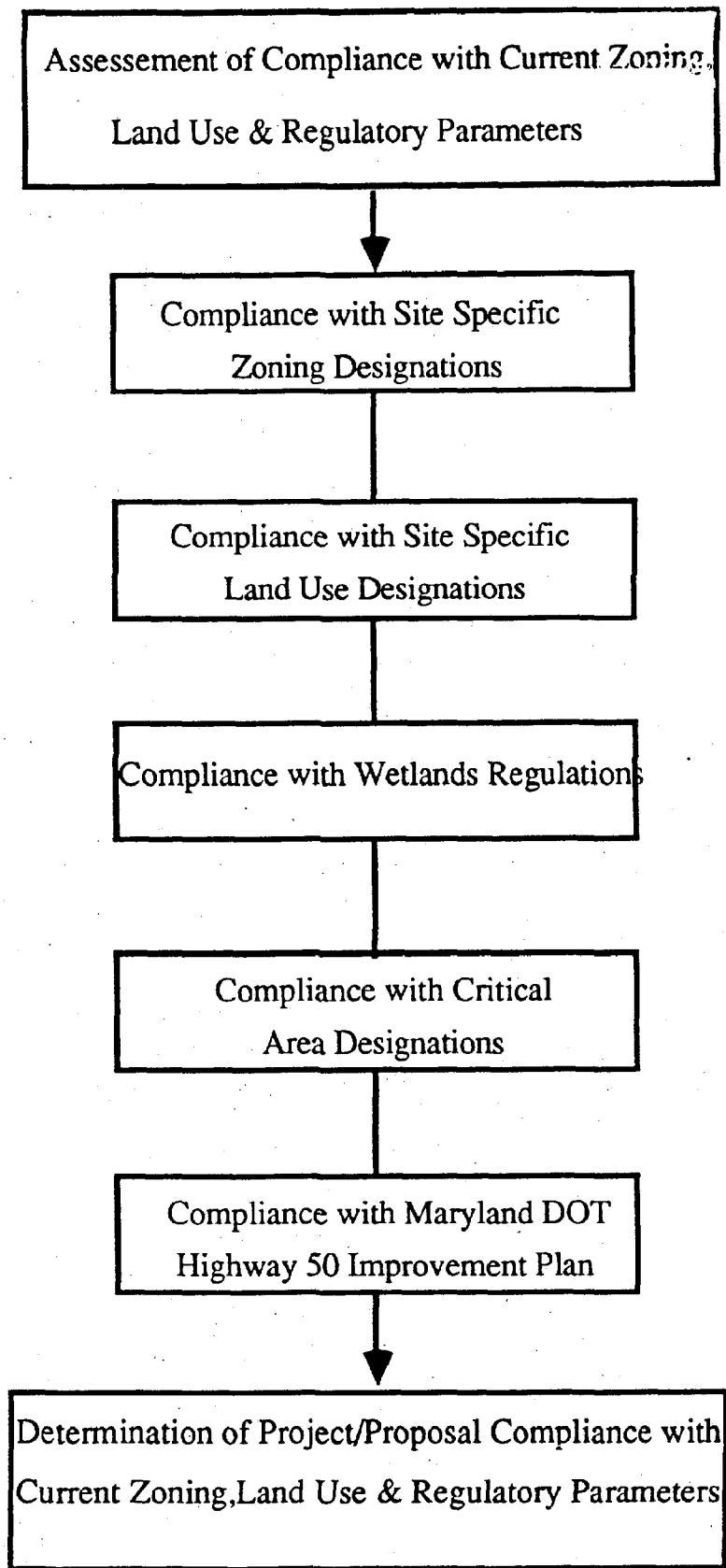
Proposals for development must comply with Critical Areas Designations as these environmental restrictions apply to the IDA, LDA and RCA development areas as currently zoned within the Narrows. As noted the entire Narrows area is considered a Critical Area, over half of which is severely restricted as a Resource Conservation Area (RCA).

***Compliance with Maryland DOT U.S. Highway 50 Improvement Plan***

Any and all proposals for development or redevelopment projects should be reviewed in relation to the U.S. Route 50 Highway Improvement Plan, including construction phase staging areas and mobility requirements. This review step is intended to protect potential developers against detrimental conditions and impacts, and to ensure key development parcels located between U.S. 50 and Route 18 with dual frontage are recognized and evaluated as high value parcels. Properties along the eastern and western Highway 50 Interchanges should be similarly recognized and reviewed.

Figure 4

I-2



### I-3      Assessment of Compatibility with Master Plan Goals and Objectives

#### I-3-1      Background

The Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Master Plan (1975, updated 1984) was developed to direct growth and development within the Districts by establishing goals related to land utilization, economic development, environmental quality, historic and cultural preservation, housing, transportation, urban design, parks and recreation, public utilities and community facilities.

Unlike the targeted objectives being formulated as part of the current strategic development program for the Kent Narrows, the goals and objectives of the Master Plan represent a broad set of guidelines for managing physical, economic and social change. It is important to point out in this regard, that these goals and objectives will vary in terms of their relative importance depending on area specific development issues. The Kent Narrows, in particular, represents an area that is considered unique because of its urban character and position as a gateway.

In reviewing projects and proposals during the Interim Period, it may be useful to refer to the Master Plan goals and objectives to ensure that proposed projects are generally compatible with district-wide growth and development guidelines.

KN  
Objectives  
I-3-2

Master Plan Evaluation Criteria: District-Wide Goals and Objectives

objective

LAND USE - GOALS

To direct the Districts' growth and development to areas that are appropriate for development by assigning an orderly and efficient utilization of land, while protecting and enhancing the Districts' rural and marine environments.

LAND USE - OBJECTIVES

- Coordinate zoning and subdivision actions with water and sewer extension to ensure that land development takes place in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Districts.
- Maintain a rate of growth which falls within the County's ability to provide services.
- Stage development so that capabilities of existing and programmed water, sewer and storm water utilities are not exceeded.
- Revitalize existing towns and villages through the maintenance and re-use of existing structures and the elimination of physical blight.
- Require that all new development meet a high standard of planning, design and workmanship.
- Provide good waterfront access for the District's residents with minimum impact on the natural environment.
- Minimize the conflicts between the uses of land and the uses of water.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - GOALS

To reinforce the Districts' present economic structure based on seafood industries and tourism with supporting diversified light industries and service businesses.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES

- Encourage and provide for the upgrade and maintenance of the existing commercial businesses' appearance along Highway 301/50.
- Locate commercial activities where the vehicular access is adequate and where pedestrian and bike paths can be integrated into the design.
- Strengthen the Districts' role as an important marine and recreation center in the regional economy.
- Attain and maintain a high rate of employment consistent with the Districts' economic role and the skills and occupational desires of the residents.
- Locate industrial development to areas where it will minimize disruptive effects on traffic circulation and adjacent land uses.
- Improve the average incomes of residents through retention and development of businesses that provide relatively high levels of wages and salaries.
- Develop a mix of diversified enterprises emphasizing marine and recreation-related businesses that will improve the stability of employment and incomes.
- Locate proposed village activity centers in areas where they will provide commercial, social, cultural, educational and recreational needs of adjacent residential development.
- Capitalize on the benefits of tourism through development of new visitor attractions and the support of existing tourism related enterprises.



### ENVIRONMENT GOALS

To protect and preserve the quality of the District's environmental quality.

### ENVIRONMENT - OBJECTIVES

- Avoid destruction of environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, ~~floodplains~~, woodlands, areas with substantial vegetation and wildlife habitats.
- Preserve tidal and nontidal wetlands and wildlife areas.
- Require the reclamation of lands disturbed by resource extraction, construction and natural events.
- Preserve the natural beauty of the waterfront.
- Preserve the visually open character of the District's rural environment.

### HISTORY - GOALS

To protect and preserve the District's cultural and historical heritage.

### HISTORY - OBJECTIVES

- Attract new businesses, tourists, and visitors, stimulate retail sales, and increase sales tax revenues by revitalizing historically significant buildings and neighborhoods.
- Increase property tax revenues by rehabilitating historic buildings.
- Publicize the available tax advantages for rehabilitation and restoration of historic properties.
- Create new jobs in the construction field and later in office, retail, restaurant and tourism activities from renovating historic buildings.

## HOUSING - GOALS

To protect and improve the quality of neighborhoods and residential developments.

## HOUSING - OBJECTIVES

- Encourage neighborhood design which stresses neighborhood quality and which minimizes the cost of subsequent neighborhood maintenance and upkeep to taxpayers.
- Upgrade the quality of existing and developing neighborhoods with assets and amenities that ensure stability and provide a sound basis for the protection and enhancement of homeowner equities.
- Demolish vacant, run-down houses which cannot or will not be upgraded in order to eliminate their blighting influence on the rest of the neighborhood.
- Provide for the expeditious removal of existing incompatible, illegal, or nonconforming uses in existing residential neighborhoods.
- Assure that future neighborhoods and housing are designed and located to be protected from floods and storm water damage, as well as adverse impacts of excessive noise and vibrations from adjoining uses, and by placing high priority on correcting and preventing such deficiencies in existing neighborhood areas.
- Provide for effective transition between residential neighborhoods and adjoining nonresidential uses through the imaginative use of urban design and the development of effective buffering techniques and standards.
- Provide for a compact and contiguous residential pattern that will minimize the costly scatterization of public services, facilities and utilities that are responsive to the specific needs generated by the residents of each community.
- Provide that local educational, recreational, commercial, and service facilities are designed and situated so as to be community assets.

## TRANSPORTATION - GOALS

To provide a safe, effective and efficient transportation system to maximize accessibility, opportunity and movement of people and goods.

## TRANSPORTATION - OBJECTIVES

- Channel the highway traffic of U.S. Route 50 through the Districts safely and expeditiously with as much benefit to the Districts economy as can be secured and with a minimum of disturbance to its residents and environment.
- Keep the road system maintained to a high standard of repair and designed to a high standard of safety.
- Design, develop and improve the transportation system as a comprehensive network.
- Stage the development of the transportation system to compliment the overall development of an area.
- Use buffers between transportation facilities and incompatible adjacent land uses.
- Minimize the introduction of traffic in residential areas and in environmentally sensitive areas.

pedestrian areas

### URBAN DESIGN - GOALS

To improve the quality of development, strengthen the image of the District, promote their heritage and generate community pride.

### URBAN DESIGN - OBJECTIVES

- Ensure high standards of construction in all forms of housing, as well as high quality environments for all residents.
- Provide for the revitalization of declining commercial areas through cooperative public/private improvements, including urban renewal and the utilization of rehabilitation financing and ordinance techniques.
- Improve the visual quality of the District through landscaping and aesthetic improvements of streets, highways, and commercial and industrial areas.
- Upgrade existing substandard areas through the reasonable application (enforcement) of current codes and ordinances as well as beautification and renewal programs.
- Create unique identification features at major entranceways to the District.
- Preserve and create identifiable communities and a variety of living environments through urban design.
- Vigorously support the inclusion of public open space such as parks, malls, landscaping, and plazas in the design of new, renewed, or expanded commercial areas.

Issues to be addressed - pod area  
parking  
county acquisition of land

### PARKS AND RECREATION - GOALS

To provide a variety of adequate parks and recreation facilities throughout the District.

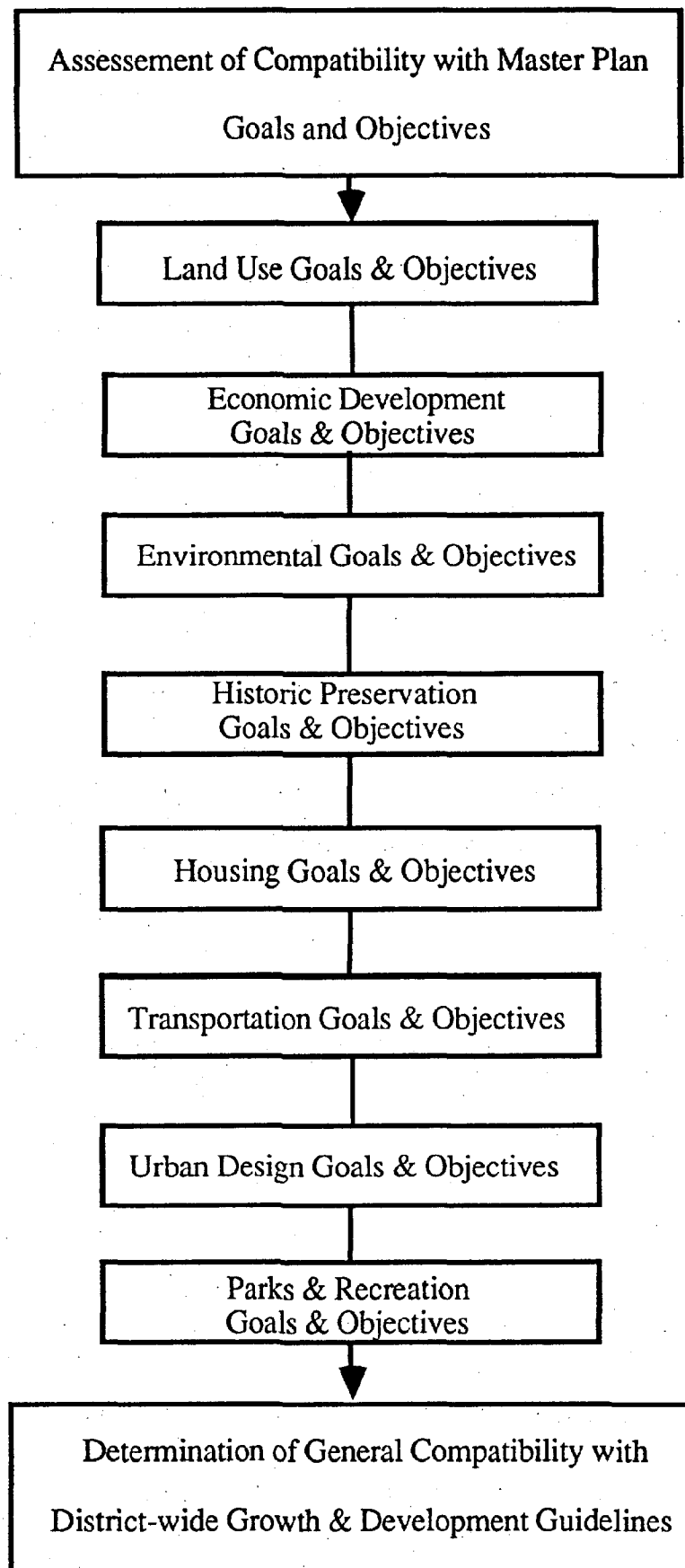
### PARKS AND RECREATION - OBJECTIVES

- Encourage the preservation of unique natural areas for eventual park and recreation development in order to maintain the attractive character of the community and to provide leisure opportunities for the population.
- Encourage residential developments to better develop, landscape and maintain their neighborhood parks.
- Acquire property in the most efficient and equitable manner to meet the present and future needs and desires of the residents of the District for parks and recreation opportunities.
- Strengthen the partnership between government and private enterprise by encouraging and assisting the private sector in providing recreation opportunities.

Chick Park  
plan

Figure 5

I-3



**SECTION C:    LEVEL II STRATEGIC EVALUATION CRITERIA: Review of  
Project Compatibility with Asset Management Criteria**

A secondary level of project review should be utilized for projects and proposals which could have a significant potential impact on the physical character, economic structure or environmental quality of the Kent Narrows.

✓ At this level the Planning Department and the County Commissioners should carefully evaluate the degree to which a proposed development could negatively affect the value of the Kent Narrows as a strategic asset for the County's future. The Narrows area, which has been targeted as a major focus for the County's tourist and visitor development efforts, has a limited amount of developable acreage and an even more limited number of key parcels which if *developed inappropriately* could permanently diminish the ability of the County to reposition Kent Narrows as a destination place.

Clearly, if a project or proposal does not meet the general criteria outlined in the preceeding section the reviewing body would notify the sponsors of incompatibilities with established land use parameters, master plan goals or strategic development objectives and would have no need to conduct a more detailed review. However, there may be proposals which meet the "Level I Criteria", yet represent considerable risks for the area from a benefit-cost perspective because of the project's use of a key parcel, impact on adjacent properties, physical dimensions, infrastructure requirements or general affect on the character of the Narrows.

The Level II review criteria described below are intended to assist the County in evaluating any proposals of this type that come under review during the Interim Period. (These criteria may be further defined and elaborated through the strategic development process, so that they can be incorporated into future land use, activity and facility guidelines.)

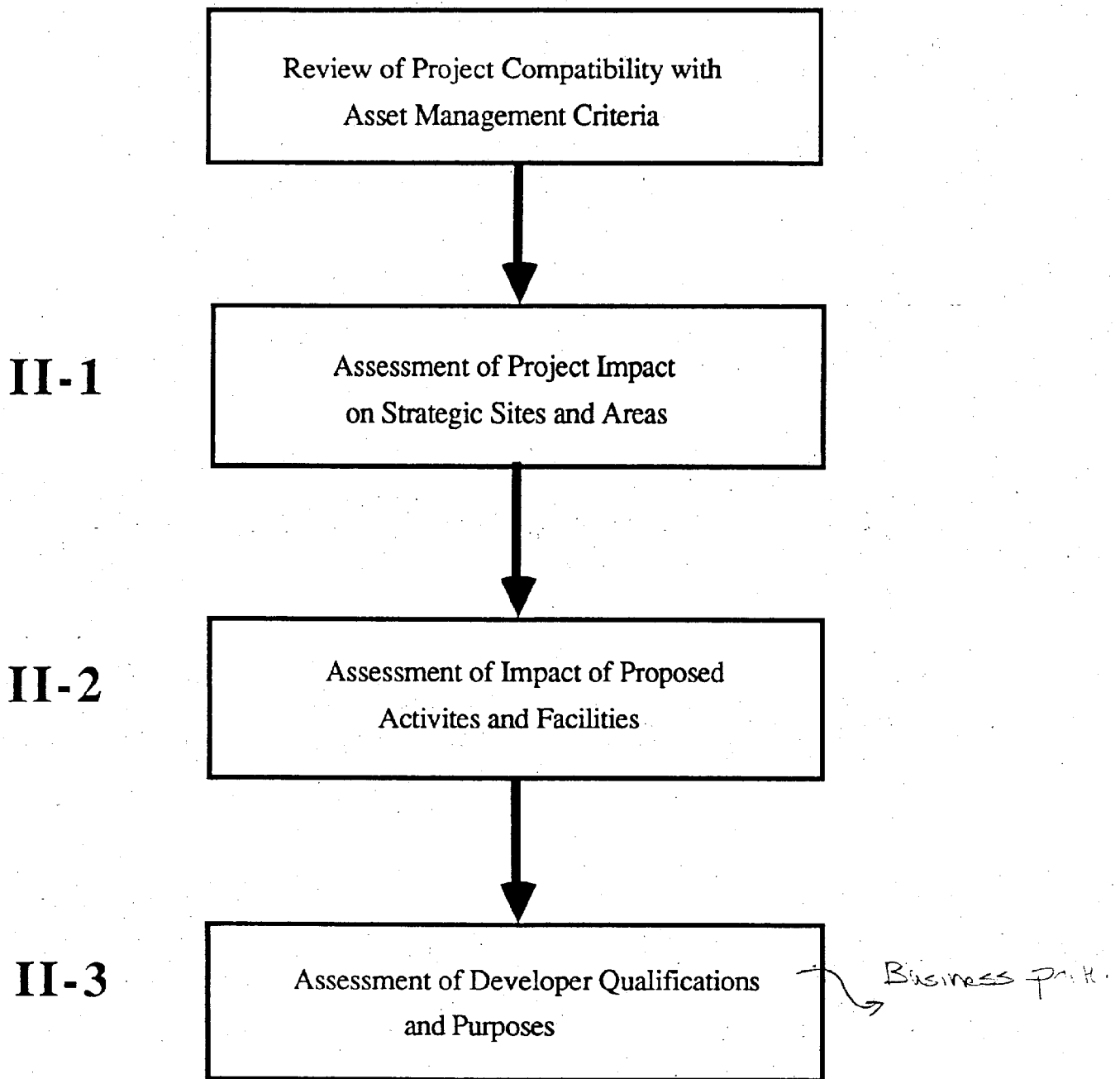


The criteria related to a project's potential impact on the value of Kent Narrows as a strategic asset have been organized into three evaluative steps.

- First, an assessment should be made regarding the effect the project may have on the limited number of key development parcels in the Narrows. Under-utilization of any of the principal sites must be recognized as having a direct impact on the overall development potential of the Narrows, and therefore on the value of the Narrows.
- Second, an assessment of the type and scale of facilities proposed should be made to determine the potential impact of the project on the physical character, infrastructure systems economic structure of the Narrows.
- Third, an assessment should be made of the developers qualifications to undertake the proposed project. A failed project whether -- due to financial limitations, poor planning and design, or inadequate management experience -- will have a costly impact on the value of the Narrows in "using up" limited sites and diminishing the image and ambience of the area.

Figure 6

## LEVEL II: EVALUATION PROTOCOL



## II-1      Assessment of Project Impact on Strategic Sites and Areas

### II-1-1      Background

The Kent Narrows' 955 acres comprise less than one half percent of the total land area of Queen Anne's County. The Narrows, which consist of two peninsulas totaling 2.6 miles in length, measures 1.5 miles at its widest point. The jagged perimeter, which appears as a series of small peninsula-like reaches along the northern and southern shore, results in some twelve (12) miles of shoreline.

Bisected along the east-west axis by U.S. Highway 50 and Maryland's Route 18, the Narrows has distinct northern and southern sectors. In addition, the peninsula-like extensions of the land mass create five sub-sectors along the northern shore and four along the southern shore. This configuration of sectors and sub-sectors has allowed for a piecemeal pattern of development which includes outlet shopping centers, marinas, condominiums, seafood processing plants, and a range of roadside restaurants and shops.

Also, as described in Section B, the overlay of existing zoning conditions, critical areas designations, and wetlands regulations, reduce the total developable land to 37% and the prime developable land to 11% of the total acreage. Add to this the fact that the improvement of U.S. Highway 50 will result in two interchanges which will substantially affect the differential value of land, and that the current ownership pattern is characterized by small parcels, and it is relatively plain to see that site location decisions will be the single most significant factor in determining the future of the Narrows.

The strategic development program, which will focus on key sites and their interconnections, will be less than effective if projects are approved during the Interim Period that involve activities or facilities which do not make optimal use of these sites as well as support the overall optimal use for the Narrows. In order to address this concern, projects should be evaluated against four site criteria: (1) strategic location; (2) site dimensions and requirements; (3) site adjacencies; (4) and relation to the relevant site sector.

## II-1-2 Site Evaluation Criteria

Reviewing projects in regard to their siting and use of a site involves four key evaluations.

- Site Location Review: Development proposals should be reviewed in regard to the estimated strategic value of sites. Sites which fall within the 11% of the area currently designated as *prime developable* land deserve special scrutiny. It is recommended that decisions on proposals for such sites be postponed until the adoption of the strategic development plan. Proposals for sites within areas that are considered to have *development potential* also should be closely evaluated, to ensure that prime development sites and current facilities are not negatively affected and ensure that the proposed project does not constrain the development objectives being pursued through the strategic planning process.
- Site Dimensions and Requirements: Development proposals should be evaluated against the size of the site, the intensity of site development and access requirements, and any constraints imposed by the proposed development of the site. Larger parcels or sites consisting of a number of assembled parcels will have a higher potential impact on the overall value and development potential of the Narrows. In addition, site access requirements can impact a far wider area than the site under review. Current parameters relating to development intensify (F.A.R.s) may be modified as a result of the strategic development plan, but as noted in Section I-2, should be maintained during the Interim Period.
- Site Adjacencies: The impact of a proposal on both developed and undeveloped sites bordering the project, in close proximity to the project, or sharing a critical route of

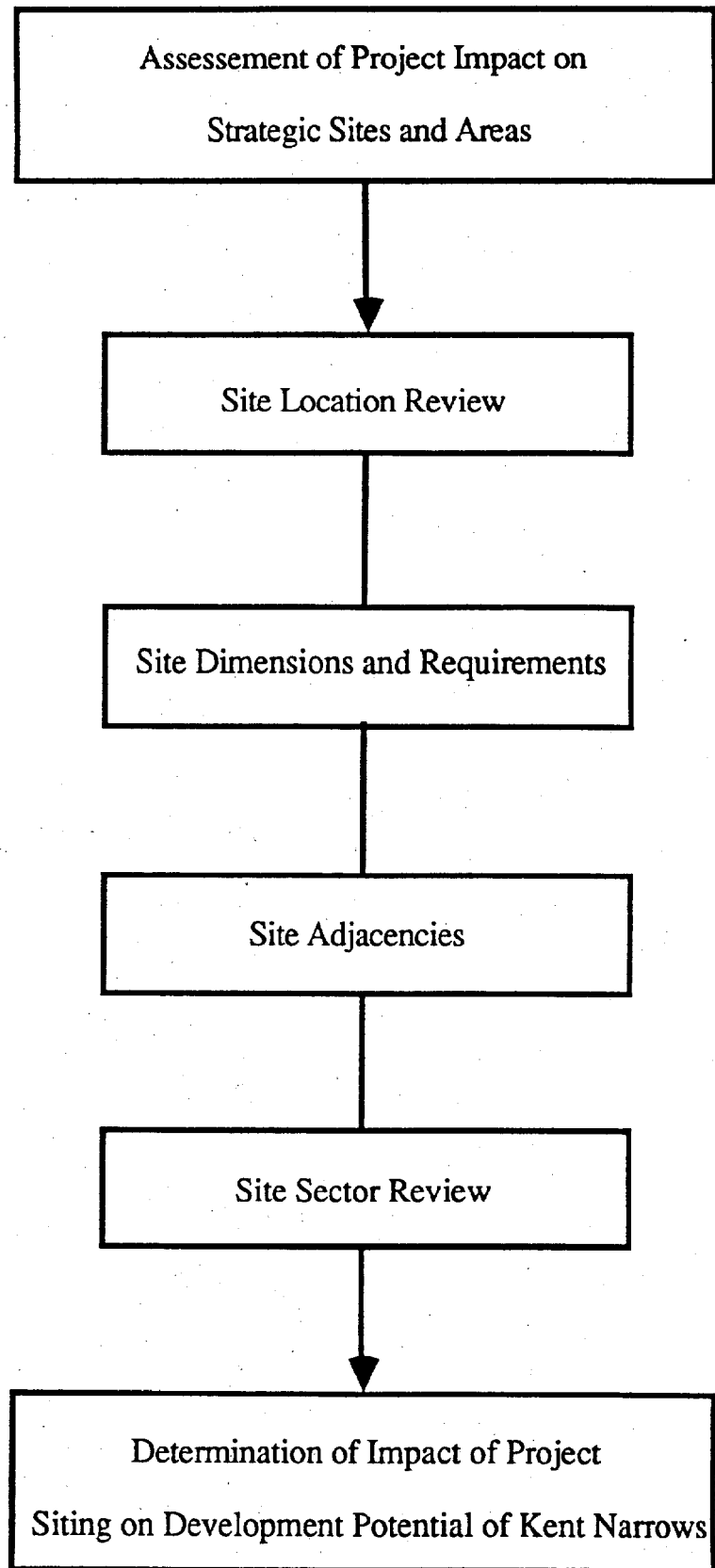
access to the project should be reviewed to ensure that the proposed siting does not deleteriously affect the value of adjacent and proximate sites.

- Site Sector Review: Proposed projects should be reviewed in regard to the current uses and potential activities under consideration in a given sub-sector. A preliminary definition of a sub-sector for the purposes of the Interim Period is any area north or south of U.S. Highway 50 which is made distinct by its land configuration, current use pattern, or current ownership pattern. Nine sub-sector areas have been identified based on these considerations for the purposes of proposal evaluation during the Interim Period. These sub-sectors have no regulatory or administrative status, and may or may not be utilized in the proposed strategic development program. Nevertheless, they roughly define areas which will be directly impacted by a given site decision. (See Appendix I)

Following these considerations, the body responsible for reviewing the project proposal should make a decision regarding whether the siting and site plan is responsive or unresponsive to the aforementioned criteria.

Figure 7

II-1



## II-2

### Assessment of Proposed Activities and Facilities on Kent Narrows Development Potential

#### II-2-1 Background

Development proposals under consideration during the Interim Period should be evaluated in regard to their proposed uses and architectural configuration.

Just as the under-utilization of a key site can diminish the overall potential of the Kent Narrows, the introduction of an activity or use which is incompatible with the development objectives for the area can limit its value as a destination place.

This evaluation will involve a degree of judgement by the reviewing body as the strategic development plan, which targets desired activities and facilities, is in the process of development. Nevertheless, under attending to the activities and facilities proposed for a site could result in the introduction of a project which permanently potential value of the Narrows.

Three evaluative criteria should be used in reviewing project proposals during the Interim Management Period: (1) the scale and type of facilities proposed; (2) the type of activities and uses which the project will introduce in the Narrows; and (3) any particular servicing or infrastructure requirements that will be required for operating the facility which involve direct or indirect costs to the County.

## II-2-2 Facility / Use Evaluation Criteria

Reviewing projects in regard to the scale and types of facilities and activities they involve requires that three evaluative criteria be met:

- Scale and Type of Facility: Development projects should be reviewed in regard to the scale of type of facility (or facilities) proposed for a site.

The scale of a facility includes: the overall square footage; the intensity of use; the elevation/facade dimensions; and the sizing and configuration of architectural elements. Reviewing the scale of the facility against the development objectives for the Narrows, does not involve a thorough architectural review. A review of aesthetic quality cannot be reasonably undertaken until clear design standards and goals are set for the Narrows. (Clearly, if a proposal is seen as generally unsatisfactory or questionable, the reviewing body should notify the developer of its concerns and suggest that re-submission occur after a formal architectural review and critique can be conducted.)

In evaluating the more objective issues related to scale, the reviewing body should ensure that:

- the square footage requirements of the facility do not exceed current land use limitations and do not negatively affect accessibility within the site or between the site and adjacent properties.
- the intensity of development (measured as a floor to area ratio or F.A.R.) falls within the designated limits of current land use regulations and does not exceed the capacities of the site to accommodate the proposed facility.
- the height and linear dimensions of the facility's elevation should be generally compatible with surrounding uses; should not obstruct water views; and should not detract from the general objective to establish the Narrows as a destination for tourists which maintains the character and ambiance of an Eastern Shore community.



- particular architectural elements or components (i.e.: towers, sheds, porches, decks, signage, etc.) which are highlighted in the design should be reviewed to ensure these elements also are generally compatible with the objectives for developing the Narrows; do not obstruct water views unnecessarily; and are generally compatible with surrounding uses and sites.
- Types of Activities and Uses: Development projects should be reviewed in regard to the types of activities or uses proposed and the effect of these activities on the site and the surrounding area.

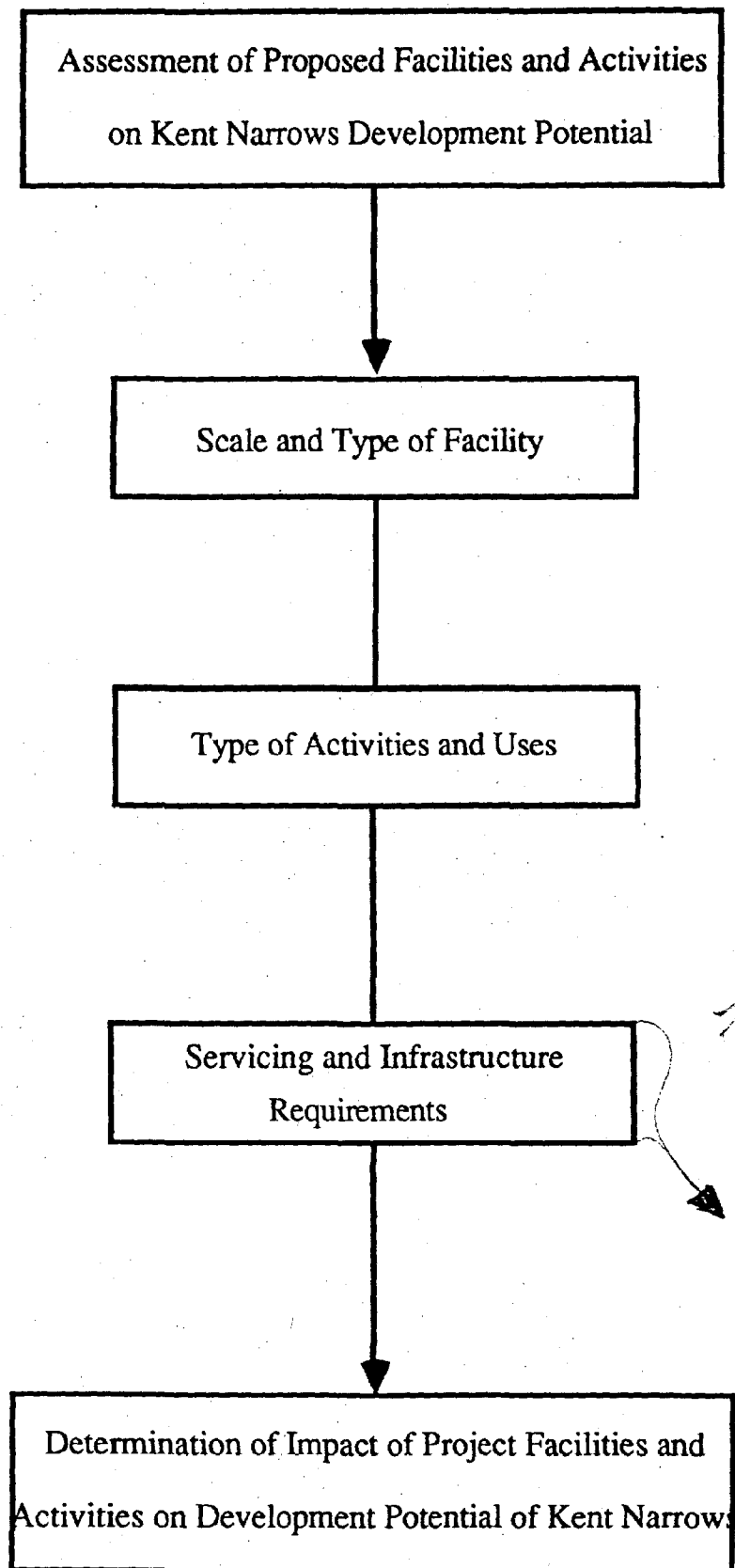
A facility entirely within the limits of current land use parameters could for example draw people and cars which greatly exceed the capacities of the site. Patterns of activity should be evaluated against daily (including evening), weekly and seasonal time frames. Types of activities supported by the proposed project should be compatible with the strategic development objectives for the Narrows.

- Servicing and Infrastructure Requirements: The scale and type of facility, and the type of activities and uses supported by the proposed development should be evaluated against required levels of public service and infrastructure support. The Planning Department must therefore make an assessment of these requirements against the current capacity of water, sewer and utility systems and particular servicing costs. Projects which place high demands on physical and administrative systems will generally require some form of developer or user financing. In general, such projects should not be granted approvals during the Interim Period as the Strategic Development Plan will identify uses that should receive public support and recommend developer fee schedules and other sources of alternative infrastructure financing. However, in the case of a very high value project (VHV project), the reviewing body may wish to grant a conditional approval pending the satisfaction of infrastructure/servicing requirements consistent with the guidelines developed in the Strategic Development Plan.

Following these considerations, the body responsible for reviewing the project proposal should make a decision regarding whether the facilities and activities proposed are responsive or unresponsive to the aforementioned criteria.

Figure 8

II-2



## II-3 Assessment of Developer Qualifications and Purposes

### II-3-1 Background

Development proposals under consideration during the Interim Period should be evaluated in regard to the qualifications, capacity and experience of the developer to successfully carry out the proposed project.

It is not uncommon for investors and developers to take positions on available parcels prior to the ratification of a plan, as these sites may increase in value as a result of the plan. In the case of Kent Narrows, the limited number of key parcels and the general knowledge of the reconfiguration of the area due to the U.S. Highway 50 improvements make certain parcels obvious targets for such speculation.

While the County cannot entirely eliminate land speculation, it should undertake a review of the development team to ensure it has the capacity and experience to successfully implement the proposed project.

## II-3-2 Developer Qualification Criteria

Reviewing project proposals in regard to developer qualifications, capacity and purposes involves three evaluative criteria:

- Developer Qualifications and Project Experience: Development teams should be required to submit statements of their qualifications and capacities to carry out the proposed project which include:
  - a list of similar projects which the developer / team participated in with references
  - a list of financing sources (lenders) involved in these projects
  - individual resumes and experiences of project team members with references
  - the financing plan for the proposed project
  - the responsibilities of firms and members of the team or development entity
  - other projects or commitments which coincide with the proposed project

Any and all factors which the reviewing body feels uncertain about should be checked out through references and/or through direct meetings with the prospective developer.

- Developer Intentions and Responsiveness to Kent Narrows Development Objectives: The proposed development may involve elements which either do not appear to fit with the objectives guiding the development of the Kent Narrows or which simply require explanation.

In meeting with the prospective developer on these issues, it is critically important to ascertain the developer's responsiveness to:

- the general objectives set for developing the Kent Narrows as a destination place
- modification of the proposed development to fit with these objectives and the specific guidelines being formulated
- assuming certain costs for infrastructure / public services that may be required by the proposed project
- awaiting formulation of Strategic Development Plan before resubmitting proposal for approval

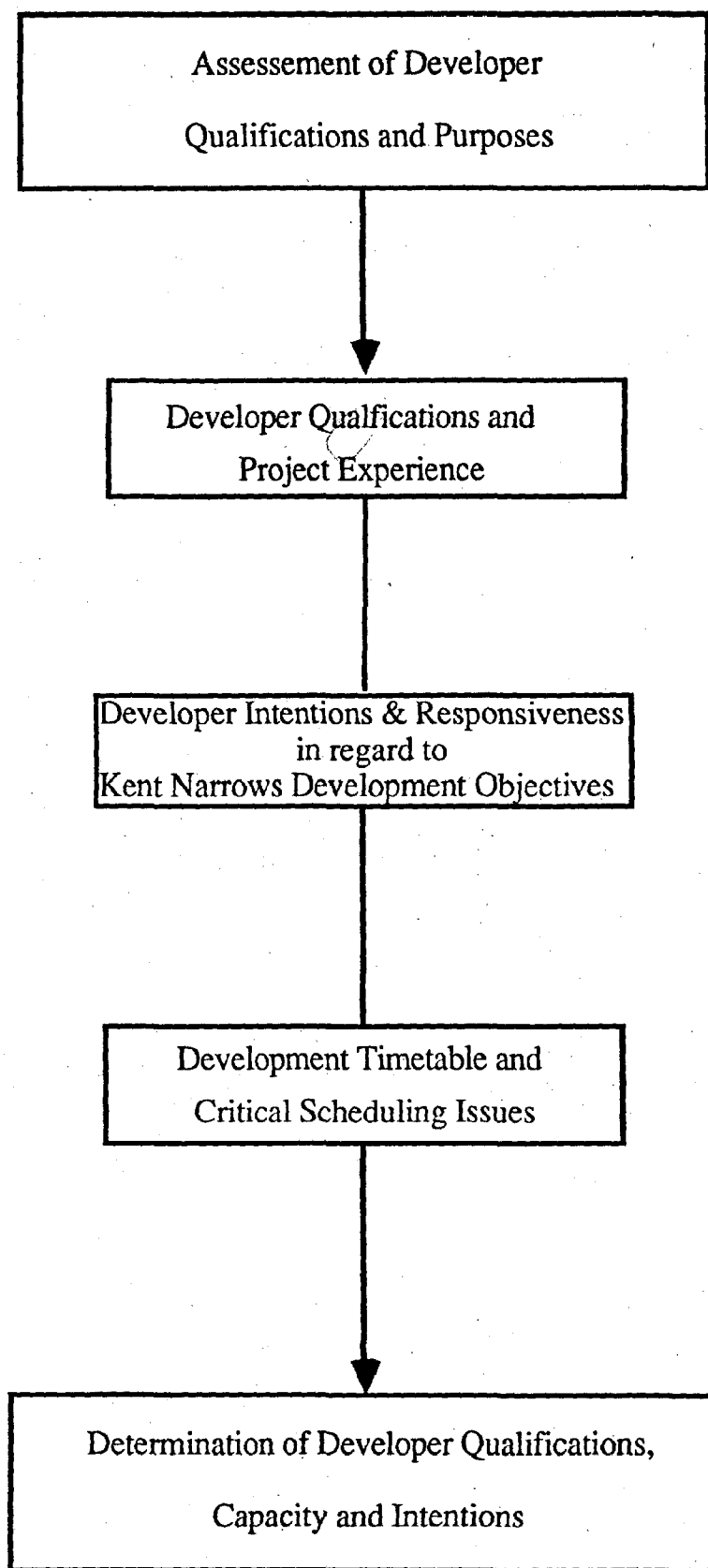
- Development Timetable and Critical Scheduling Issues: The proposed development should be reviewed in regard to the construction timetable and in terms of any scheduling issues which are critical to the success of the project. In particular, the reviewing body should ensure that:

- the development timetable appears realistic in proposing a schedule which is neither unreasonably compressed nor unduly stretched out
- the development team is fully aware of the construction schedule and requirements for U.S. Highway 50 improvements, and any relevant impacts are reflected in their project schedule
- a suitable project scheduling document is submitted with the development proposal for the purposes of a preliminary review

Following these considerations of the developers' qualifications, capacities and purposes the body responsible for reviewing the project proposal should make a decision regarding acceptance of the development team and its approach to the project.

Figure 9

II-3



**SECTION D:    Types of Reviews, Requests and Issues Involving Level I and  
Level II Evaluation Protocols**

During the Interim Management Period, the County should anticipate four types of development- related matters that may require Level I or II evaluative reviews or other administrative responses. These include:

- Development Proposals
- Redevelopment Proposals, Property Improvement Plans and Facility Expansion Plans
- Land Acquisition and Assemblage Activity
- Community-based Requests for Information or concerns regarding development plans and economic impacts related to U.S. Highway 50 construction.

In general, each of these matters will entail a definite sequence of review and decision making steps which can be addressed administratively. However, under special circumstances where issues of governance or legal prerogatives are involved, the County should consult legal counsel for advice. Below, steps the County would normally pursue in reviewing each of these matters from an administrative perspective are briefly outlined.

## **1. Development Proposals**

Development Proposals for parcels either owned or held under various forms of purchase/lease agreements, or through joint ventures between developers and land owners, or under any other arrangement, should be evaluated through a four step process:

- 1.1 Preliminary Evaluation: the proposal should be reviewed to determine that the site is either owned, under agreement or purchasable by the proposing developer. Ideas or concepts for sites owned by the County (or by private owners not entertaining the sale of their properties) should be deferred from consideration during the Interim Period. ✓
- 1.2 Level I Evaluation: development proposals should next be reviewed against the Level I evaluative criteria to determine whether projects meet the strategic development objectives set for the Narrows; comply with the regulatory, zoning and land use conditions currently established for the Narrows area; and meet the relevant goals and objectives of the County's Master Plan.
- 1.3 Level II Evaluation: development proposals which meet Level I criteria should be reviewed against Level II evaluative criteria to ensure that projects do not adversely affect the future value of the Narrows as a destination place in regard to: the projects' impact on strategic sites and areas within the Narrows; the projects' impact of facilities and activities which are part of the proposed development; and the capacity and experience of the developer to carry out the proposed project with quality and in a timely manner.  
  
The reviewing body should decide whether to approve the proposed project; deny approval due to specified or general conditions relating to Level II criteria; or to suggest that the developer modify and resubmit the proposal for review.
- 1.4 Special Circumstances: During the Interim Period project approvals should follow only the most thorough evaluation. Developers should understand that project approvals will be the exception during this period, as the County wishes to use the Strategic Development Plan as the foundation for developing the Narrows. However, under special circumstances,



it may be in the best interest of the County to approve development proposals during the Interim Period. These circumstances include:

- Projects of Very High Value: which will increase the value of the Narrows and appear consistent with the direction and purpose of the Strategic Development objectives being pursued.
- Projects involving substantial developer risks/costs: in which a developer in full compliance with current parameters and regulations is facing clear and substantiated financial risks which can only be alleviated through an agreement to proceed. Despite the lack of fit that may result with the Strategic Plan, the County wishes to avoid unnecessary hardship for development teams who are in general compliance with currently established criteria. Given the short time frame for completing the Strategic Development Plan, if such cases exist, they should be rare exceptions.

## 2. Redevelopment Proposals

Redevelopment proposals including property improvements and facility expansions should generally be reviewed against the same procedures and criteria as development proposals. Obviously, Level I criteria relating to land use and zoning will generally have been met as extant uses have been "grand fathered" into the current zoning parameters and landuse guidelines. However, expansions may involve changes in the type of use or intensity of development that require modifications (i.e.: variances) to existing conditions. *Add - at site plan*

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2.1 Preliminary Evaluation: any request should be from the owner or leasee of the property, and meet the general regulatory parameters which currently serve as conditions for the property. The reviewing body may entertain granting a variance under special circumstances in which case the proposed improvement or expansion should be fully evaluated against Level I and Level II criteria. In the case of proposed projects which do not require variances or conditional approvals, the reviewing body may approve the project pending compliance with Level I and Level II criteria; reject the proposed improvement as generally inconsistent with the objectives for the area; or suggest that the property owner or party of interest resubmit the proposal respective of certain concerns or modifications prior to Level I and II reviews.

2.2 Level I Evaluation: any property improvement or expansion and any plan for redevelopment of an extant property, should be reviewed against Level I evaluative criteria. The reviewing body should decide whether the project under review meets these criteria and should be further evaluated against Level II criteria; whether it fails to meet these criteria and should be rejected; or whether a recommendation to resubmit the proposal should be made.

2.3 Level II Evaluation: any property improvement or expansion, and any plan for redevelopment of an extant property which meets Level I criteria should then be evaluated against Level II criteria pertaining to the projects impact on the value of the site and adjacent sites, and the impact of expanded or redeveloped facilities. The reviewing body should decide whether the project under review meets all relevant Level II criteria and deserves special consideration for an approval during the Interim Period; whether it fails to meet these

criteria and should be rejected; or whether a recommendation to resubmit the proposal with modifications should be made.

2.4 Special Circumstances: a proposal for property improvement, expansion or redevelopment will generally meet the special circumstances required for approval during the Interim Period under the following conditions:

- The proposed Property Improvement clearly enhances the site and does not affect the Strategic Development Objectives for the Kent Narrows, in any perceived manner.
- The proposed Property Improvement involves a project considered to be of "Very High Value" which meets the relevant evaluative criteria and/or contributes to the overall development potential of the Narrows.
- The proposed Property Improvement involves a necessary condition for business survival of proposing party and requires immediate action during the Interim Period

### 3. Land Acquisition and / or Assemblage Activity

The County cannot apply the Level I and II evaluative criteria in assessing land acquisition or assemblage activity, despite the effect such investment may have on the future value and development potential of the Kent Narrows. Land acquisition activity can only be monitored limiting County intervention to maintaining an information base on the disposition and ownership of properties. However, the County may wish to take one of two actions in circumstances that merit a more direct form of intervention.

- 3.1 Notification of Acquirer: the County may wish to notify the acquiring party that it is aware of its activity and that a set of conditions apply to development in the Narrows which will be elaborated and/or modified as the result of a Strategic Development Plan.
- 3.2 Call for Special Meeting: where strategic sites or large parcels are being assembled, the County may wish to call a meeting of the parties to inquire into their plans for the area, and review the goals and objectives of the County for the Narrows. Obviously, following the Interim Period, the most productive means of gaining control over strategic parcels will be for the County to acquire these sites through a development corporation (DEVCO) set up for the explicit purpose of facilitating the Strategic Development Plan for Kent Narrows.

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#### 4. Community-Based Concerns

Community concerns will tend to be focused on three principal issues:

- Concerns about the goals, objectives and alternatives regarding the Strategic Development Plan and community access to the planning process
- Concerns over development proposals which appear to threaten the future value or current quality of life in the Narrows
- Concerns over delays in Administrative decision making regarding the adoption of a Strategic Development Plan and/or decisions over development proposals made outside the context of the plan

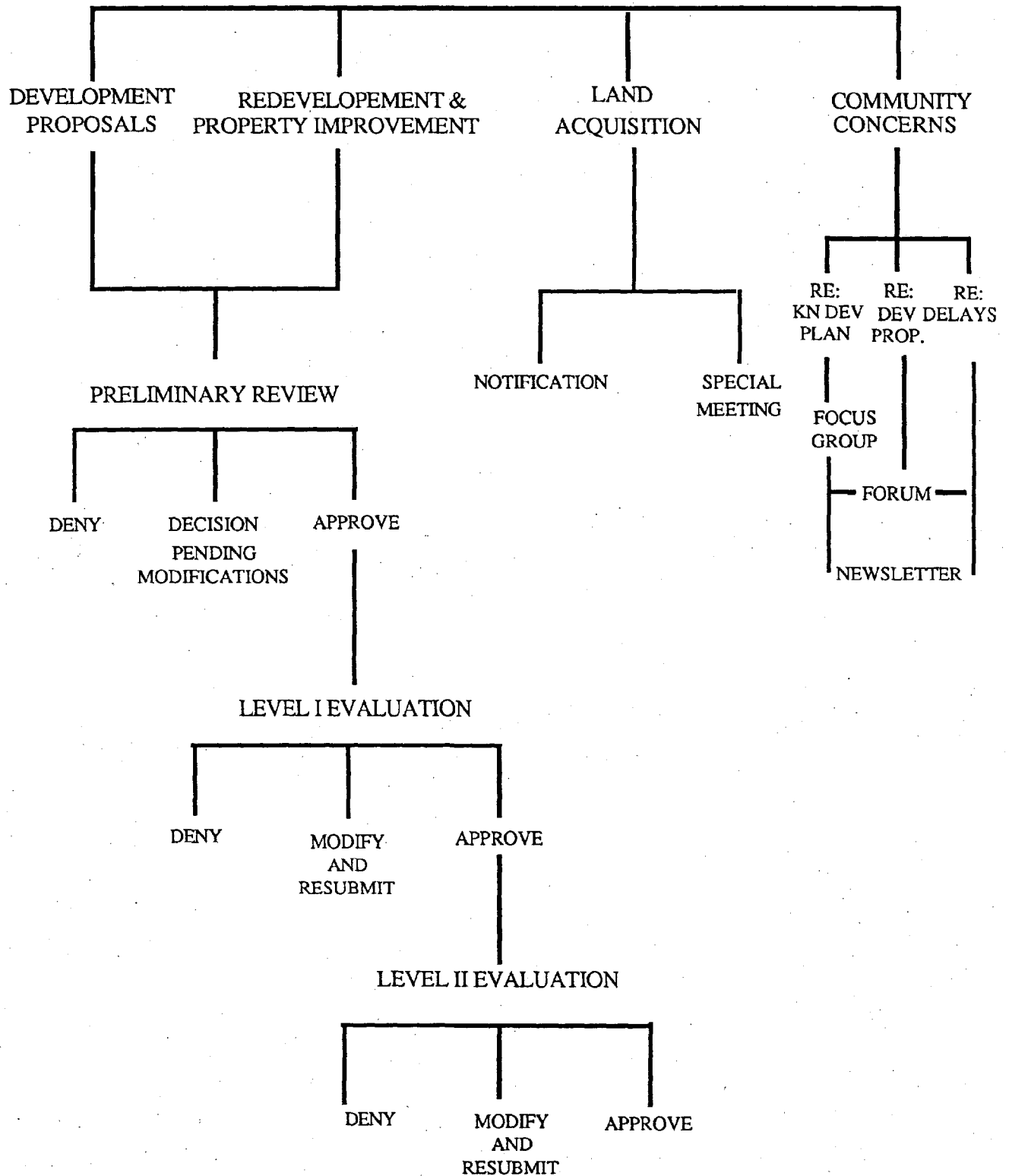
Three (3) forms of communication are suggested for addressing these concerns through the Interim Period. It may also be useful to employ these communication vehicles through the implementation period and for addressing concerns that will inevitably arise during the construction of U.S. Highway 50 Improvements.

- 4.1 County Forums: a regularly scheduled series of open meetings on the development options for the Kent Narrows should be held for the purpose of updating citizens and addressing concerns or questions. These meetings should be held about once every six weeks or twice each quarterly period.
- 4.2 Focus Groups: intense, half-day sessions with small groups of individuals representing business owners, property owners, economic development interests, associations and civic organizations, and the public sector should be held to guide the consultants and Planning Department in the formulation of the Kent Narrows development strategy.
- 4.3 Newsletter: a monthly newsletter should be prepared for wide distribution to make people aware of the opportunities and challenges in establishing the Narrows as a destination place, and to keep citizens updated on the development plan, the bridge construction schedule and other issues impacting the Narrows.

These three vehicles provide various levels of communication which can reduce rumor and speculation, and encourage active participation, during those periods where uncertainty and disconcert is likely to be at its height.

Figure 10

# ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION CHART



# DECISION CHART



Level	Meets Criterion	Approaches Criterion	Does Not Meet Criterion
<b>LEVEL I General Evaluation Criteria</b>  <b>I-1 Assessment of Fit with Preliminary Objectives Related to Strategic Development Program</b>  I-1-1 Background I-1-2 Strategic Development Evaluation Criteria  <b>I-2 Assessment of Fit with Current Zoning, Land Use and Regulatory Parameters</b>  I-2-1 Background I-2-2 Compliance-Based Evaluation Criteria  <b>I-3 Assessment of Compatibility with Master Plan Goals and Objectives</b>  I-3-1 Background I-3-2 Master Plan Evaluation Criteria: District-Wide Goals and Objectives			
<b>LEVEL II Strategic Evaluation Criteria</b>  <b>II-1 Assessment of Project Impact on Strategic Sites and Areas</b>  II-1-1 Background II-1-2 Site Evaluation Criteria  <b>II-2 Assessment of Proposed Activities and Facilities on Kent Narrows Development Potential</b>  II-2-1 Background II-2-2 Facility/Use Evaluation Criteria  <b>II-3 Assessment of Developer Qualifications and Purposes</b>  II-3-1 Background II-3-2 Developer Qualification Criteria			



